

The Internet Governance Forum and other governance activities

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WSIS Overview

- World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS) convened in 2001 to tackle the “digital divide” and harness the potential of ICTs to drive economic and social development
- Three issues dominated the WSIS (<http://www.itu.int/wsis/>):
 - 1) Internet governance, 2) financing strategies, and 3) ICT development and capacity building
- In the area of Internet governance the WSIS called for
 - A multi-stakeholder forum for dialogue called the **Internet Governance Forum (IGF)**
 - A process of “**Enhanced Cooperation**” in the area of the development of globally applicable principles on public policy issues

WSIS – key results

- In Internet governance:
 - Minimal impact on Internet structures (for now)
 - Recognition of roles and importance of existing Internet organizations and governance mechanisms (“Internet Community”), but not yet equal to Gov’t, Private sector or Civil Society
 - Understanding that there is a need to move the debate beyond technical aspects (IP address allocation, root servers, DNS, etc.)
- In general:
 - Increased focus on ICTs for economic dev’t. and capacity building
 - Internet Community - very good collaboration
 - Outcome characterized as “Everyone was happy” which translates into “outcomes can be interpreted as one wants”
 - Areas to watch: Enhanced Cooperation (and the IGF)

IGF – Differing Views

The Forum should be a place to:

- **Affect Policy/Government PRACTICES:**
 - “multi-stakeholder policy dialogue” - Govt’s, CS, PS participate as equals
 - “Strengthen and enhance the engagement of stakeholders in existing and/or future Internet governance mechanisms
- **Affect International Policy - NOT Operations:**
 - “discuss cross-cutting international public policies”
 - “discuss issues that do not fall within the scope of any existing body;”
 - “no oversight function and would not replace existing arrangements, mechanisms, institutions or organisations”
 - “neutral, non-duplicative and non-binding process”
 - “no involvement in day-to-day or technical operations of the net”
- **Advance Development Agendas:**
 - “contribute to Internet governance capacity building in developing countries”
 - “exchange of information and best practices”
 - “use expertise of the academic, scientific and technical communities”

IGF – more....

- Led by a representative of the UNSG - Nitin Desai.
- Small focused secretariat in Geneva - led by Markus Kummer (from Swiss gov't.)
- IGF Advisory Group to be appointed by UNSG
 - Call for names (due 18 April)
 - 20 Gov't, 10 Private Sector, 10 Civil Society
 - Internet Community looking for candidates
 - First meeting - Athens, Oct. 28 – Nov. 2, 2006.

IGF success criteria

- Our contributions have emphasized the following:
 - Focus on development - areas that impact access to and availability of the Internet
 - Focus on cross-cutting international public policy issues
 - Model is that of a Program Committee not a gov't. advisory body
 - Multi-stakeholder participation
 - Clear, focused, limited agenda
 - Share, inform, collaborate
 - Promote best practice and expertise sharing
 - Limit new organizational structures and meetings - leverage existing organizations and knowledge base

But IGF is not the end....

- The IGF is but one component of Internet governance activities:
 - “Enhanced Cooperation” procedure will be an important area to watch:
 - a process whereby “governments, on an equal footing, ... carry out their roles and responsibilities, in international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet” including “the development of globally-applicable principles on public policy issues associated with the coordination and management of critical Internet resources...” etc.
 - Very large range of interpretations as to what this means!
 - N. Desai, IGF Chair, is consulting informally on how to start a process aimed at enhancing cooperation on international Internet public policy issues.
 - “Reform” of the ITU in the post-WSIS environment
 - Internet governance discussion inextricably linked to discussion of the “future of the Internet”, NGN, etc.
- This is but the beginning:
 - Success of the Internet has driven Internet governance to the fore
 - Internet resources are now considered by nations to be strategic assets
 - Internet pervasiveness and openness causes concern amongst some governments.

What should we expect

- Internet Governance Forum
 - Must show immediate value or fail – rehash of WSIS issues will turn away key governments and stakeholders
- More activity in “Enhanced Cooperation”
 - This is an important area as it is ripe for
 - Much rides on ICANN and GAC evolution
 - Some governments see “Enhanced Cooperation” already underway – other governments and UN orgs. see it as a tool to achieve “control” objectives (and the latter are very concerned by the Internet)